

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 10704 200857Z

15

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /056 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4044

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 10704

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJ: PX CAPER: POL COL THIPCHAROEN

REF: BANGKOK 10055

1. UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTERIOR CHALO WANNAPHUTI ON APRIL 19 APPROVED POLICE DIRECTOR-GENERAL POL. GEN SISUK MAHINTHARATHEP'S REQUEST TO DISMISS POL. COL. THIPCHAROEN CHUWET, WHO HAD BEEN IMPLICATED IN PX GOODS HIJACKING RING. HE WAS DISMISSED FOR ABSENCE FROM DUTY WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION.

2. THIPCHAROEN, A RANKING COLONEL AND DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE SPECIAL BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL POLICE, HAD APPARENTLY BEEN ABLE TO LEAVE THE SCENE OF THE CRIME AND LATER HID OUT SUCCESSFULLY IN SONGKHLA FOR A FEW DAYS BY CLAIMING THAT HE WAS ON A SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT. HE ALLEGEDLY ALSO CAJOLED THE POLICE CHIEF OF HAT YAI CITY, SONGKHLA PROVINCE, TO SEND A MESSAGE TO NATIONAL POLICE HQ IN BANGKOK THAT THIPCHAROEN HAD BEEN IN SONGKHLA WHEN THE RAID HAD TAKEN PLACE IN BANGKOK AT WHICH THIPCHAROEN WAS SEEN.

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 10704 200857Z

COMMENTS: SISUK'S ACTION APPEARS TO GIVE CREDENCE TO

HIS STATEMENTS THAT HE WOULD CONDUCT A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION AND DEAL HARSHLY WITH THOSE INVOLVED IN THE PX GOODS HIJACKING RING. ON THE OTHER HAND SOME OBSERVERS HAVE EXPRESSED THE SUSPICION THAT THIPCHAROEN WAS DISMISSED TO CUT OFF FURTHER MEANINGFUL INVESTIGATION WHICH MIGHT HAVE IMPLICATED HIGHER RANKING OFFICIALS IN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT AND THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. THE FACT THAT THIPACHAROEN WAS DISMISSED WITHOUT LOSING HIS RIGHTS TO BENEFITS SUCH AS A PENSION TENDS TO REINFORCE THIS SUSPICION. HE COULD HAVE BEEN FIRED, IN WHICH CASE HE WOULD HAVE LOST ALL SUCH BENEFITS.

WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

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